

**CAPE MAY COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT  
AND  
IMPROVEMENT PLAN  
2004**

**Goal: Clean and Plentiful Water**

**Cape May County rivers, lakes, and coastal waters will be fishable, swimmable and support healthy ecosystems. Surface and ground water will be clean sources of water. Every person in Cape May County will have safe drinking water. Adequate quantities of surface and ground water will be available for all uses.**

**Indicators:**

- The number of PNC water systems, inspections and compliance rates
- The number of surface water-samples and results
- The number of private wells sampled
- Migrant farm camp wells sampled
- Ground and surface water complaints

***Key Issues- Priorities***

Although most ground water in Cape May County is of high quality, chemicals affect some ground waters and bacteria that may be present at levels that would be detrimental to human health. Elevated levels of sodium and chloride have been found in some areas of the Villas, Lower Township.

Private (homeowner) wells are sampled if water quality problems are suspected. Generally, these suspected problems are associated with a contaminated site or as a result of an ongoing investigation into a specific contaminant (e.g., volatile organics).

This department has undertaken some activities to educate private well owners about water quality and testing. Education regarding septic systems is also available.

Although there are sufficient quantities of water to meet statewide needs, some areas of the state are projected to experience shortages of water. These deficits may worsen as population and demand for water increase.

Being a peninsula, Cape May County is an extremely popular destination for recreational bathing, boating, fishing, and other water activities. This department tests coastal waters weekly from May to September to assess conditions for these activities.

The department, in partnership with the residents, community watershed association, natural resource conservation organizations, farmers, local governments, businesses and

industries from each watershed, will assess existing information to identify key issues and problems specific to their watershed management area. The significant causes of water quality problems, including point and non-point sources of pollution, will be evaluated and the opportunities for improvement identified. Then, based on this evaluation, a set of strategies tailored to that particular watershed management area would be implemented to achieve water resources goals and milestones, including water quality standards, in each watershed management area.

### *Activities*

This department will continue our Wellhead Protection Program by sampling domestic well clusters in Lower Township. This sampling has uncovered volatile organic, sodium, and chloride contamination. If volatile organic contaminants are identified in a sample, further sampling in the area is conducted to determine the extent. Data from wellhead is shared with NJDEP and United States Geological Survey (USGS).

Under the new private well testing act, Cape May County will certify well water for real estate transactions. We will also certify other new wells for coliform, nitrates, iron, manganese, pH, and chlorides. Through this certification process, we will be alerted when contamination of a well is identified. If deemed necessary follow up sampling of neighboring wells will be performed.

Of the two hundred public non-community water systems in Cape May County, one-quarter transient, and one-half non-transient facilities are inspected each year for compliance. NJDEP Bureau of Safe Drinking Water alerts this department of any significant non-compliers. We will inspect these facilities and issue notices of violation and settlement penalties.

Existing physical connections will continue to be inspected once a year when notified by the facility. New physical connections are also inspected and reported to NJDEP.

The Cape May County Health Department enforces all Chapter 9A regulations to protect the quality of the ground and surface waters. This department must regulate new and altered septic system installations, review constructions plans, witness soil test pits and certify installations in accordance with State standards. Complaints regarding unpermitted discharge of sewage and septic system malfunctions are also investigated. Because portions of this county lie in areas of Pinelands, this department coordinates with the Pinelands Commission when a septic system application is received. Before this department issues a septic permit, all Pinelands requirements must first be met.

Watershed management is ongoing in this county. This department's water monitoring program will assist in determining surface water quality. The five programs include '208' Non-Point Source Monitoring Program (17 sites), Tuckahoe River Project (5 sites), Pine Barrens Water Quality Survey (14 sites), Delaware Bay Tributaries (13 sites), and Estuarine Water Planning/Research Program (12 sites). In coordination with the

NJDEP, two ambient surface water stations are sampled five consecutive weeks during the summer. Future objectives include identifying sources of problem areas and eliminating these sources. Upon request, this data can be utilized by watershed management planning groups.

The Cooperative Coastal Monitoring Program (CCMP) continues to be a high priority in Cape May County. Sampling includes Ocean Recreational (59 sites), Back Bay Environmental (44 sites), Delaware Bay (8 sites), and Back Bay Recreational (8 sites). These sites are tested from mid May to mid September. Storm water runoff is also an important part of this program. Non-point source pollution can cause problems such as beach closures. Increased monitoring after major storm events can help to identify problem areas within municipal infrastructures (stormwater systems). Steps can then be taken by the municipalities to prevent future contamination of ocean and back bay waters. Municipalities have also been borrowing the sewer cameras to identify any possible problems.

All results for above sampling are sent to NJDEP via computer and are posted on the web site: [www.capemaycountyims.net](http://www.capemaycountyims.net). This site is an internet map server site.

### **Goal: Clean Air**

**It is important that the air we breathe is healthful and that pollutants do not damage our environment. Cape May County is a sensitive ecosystem.**

#### **Indicators:**

- The number of ozone action days
- The number of minor and B-source facilities. These numbers are minimal in relation to other sections of the State because the main industry in Cape May County is the summer tourist industry. The inspection percentage should be reduced.
- The number of gas stations and dry cleaners and the number of compliance. There are only a few dry cleaners in the county. Monitoring dry cleaners will not be a problem. It is recommended that gas station inspection numbers be increased to offset B- source inspection reduction.
- Citizen complaints as well as complaints from the NJDEP will be addressed and acted on accordingly.

#### ***Key issues – Priorities***

The county is concerned about ozone. Ozone exposure can cause coughing, chest pains and throat irritation in healthy individuals and asthma reactions in sensitive individuals. There is a large senior citizen population in this county that is subjected to increased illnesses, and possible death, associated with the exposure to high ozone levels. Another area of concern is fine particulate matter, primarily from incomplete combustion from

vehicular traffic. During the summer months, cars are backed up for miles due to traffic jams going to our resort areas.

Milestone: By the year 2007, air throughout the state must meet the National Clean Air Act Standards for ozone and other air pollutants.

### **Goal: Safe and Healthy Communities**

**Cape May County is tourist industry orientated with a sensitive ecological system. As such, it is extremely important that the county be free from unacceptable human health and ecological risks due to direct or indirect exposure to hazardous substances.**

### **Indicators**

- The number of haz-mat incidents (type and outcome of any cleanups)
- The number of indoor air quality complaints and their outcome.
- The number of solid waste facilities, inspections, and compliance rates
- The number of solid waste citizen complaints, types and outcomes
- The number of pesticide inspections and compliance rates
- The number of pesticide complaints and outcomes
- The number of noise complaints and outcomes

### ***Key Issues- Priorities***

This county has expanded and has changed dramatically over the last fifty years. We have learned the hard way that hazardous waste cannot be disposed of in a reckless manner. Over application of chemicals has been an age-old problem. Educating the public and industry to properly dispose of unused portions of potentially hazardous chemicals is vital.

The continual identification of age old hazardous dumping sites, abandoned gasoline storage tanks and leaking home heating storage tanks will be a major activity of the Haz-Mat unit.

We will also continue to respond to NJDEP referrals for haz-mat incidents and spills. In addition, we will also respond to local complaints. We have advised the NJDEP, local police, and emergency management of our ability to respond on a twenty-four hour basis.

Solid waste facilities will continue to be inspected for compliance. Solid waste complaints from citizens and NJDEP will be investigated.

Conduct interviews of solid waste transporters needing NJDEP decals.

Locating and cleaning up tire sites will be a priority due to West Nile Virus. Dead crows are also collected and transported to Trenton to be tested for West Nile Virus.

The improper handling and use of pesticides can create risks to anyone in the vicinity of the application of those chemicals.

Commercial and residential noise complaints investigated by this department tend to be recurring with very few violations actually found. The adoption of the “Model Noise Ordinance” by municipalities would assist in the enforcement of noise violations.

Our haz-mat team is training and updating their skills in the event of a bioterrorism threat. Special practice drills are scheduled to coordinate various agencies in emergency situations. These agencies include local, municipal, and county government.

As new situations and educational courses come to our attention, we will strive to update ourselves so that we can meet emerging problems.

### **Goal: Open and Effective Government**

**Cape May County Health Department will work to achieve its goals through the involvement of citizens, stakeholders, and government entities.**

#### *Key Issues- Priorities*

This department would like to have our data easily available for public and governmental use. The surface water data and private well data will be useful for the ongoing watershed management program. Included in the private well database will be information regarding their septic systems.

As a result of the Open Public Records Act, this department will provide information to persons filing a proper request form.